U-237 c.1 Inside

CONFIDENTIAL

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Research and Analysis Branch

097.3
Z1092
No.475

NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN LONDON

JULY 1942 - JANUARY 1943

R&A 475

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REFERENCE DIVISION
FILE COPY
PLEASE RETURN
REF

January 26, 1943

 CONFIDENTIAL

NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN LONDON

JULY 1942 - JANUARY 1943

		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	2
II.	THE JULY PRONOUNCEMENTS	3
III.	THE SWEDISH REACTION	8
IV.	THE CENTRAL PURPOSE OF THE JULY STATEMENTS	12
V.	THE NEW YEAR'S CLARIFICATION	14
VI.	CONCLUSION	17

NORWEGIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN LONDON

JULY 1942 - JANUARY 1943.

I. INTRODUCTION

In July of 1942, there emanated from Norwegian circles in London several statements on Norwegian foreign policy. These pronouncements spread dismay in certain quarters; particularly alarmed were those circles in Sweden which expected an increasing collaboration among the Northern states after the war. At the opening of the new year in 1943, officials of the Norwegian government-in-exile released statements on the same subjects. The principles they voiced were not strikingly different from those professed in July. Yet the New Year pronouncements were approved and even welcomed in some of the circles which had been dismayed in July. Why the reception was so different in the two instances, should be clear from the following paragraphs.

II. THE JULY PRONOUNCEMENTS

The statements issued in July were not exactly official, but they were accepted more or less as such because they emanated from circles very close to the Norwegian government-in-exile. There were three formulations of particular interest, all appearing in Norsk Tidend, the London organ of the Norwegian government Information Service. First in time was a review article,[1] treating of a Swedish booklet (to be discussed below); next an editorial[2] on the subject of the booklet; and a few days later, an expository article[3] by the political adviser to the Norwegian Foreign Office. That these formulations were part of a common endeavor, is suggested by the circumstance that a further statement on the subject by the same political adviser was released in the July 17 issue of News of Norway, the organ of the Norwegian Information Service, which appears not in London, but in Washington. In the discussion that followed, the editorial of July 15 was the statement usually referred to, for it was tacitly regarded as the most authoritative statement.

---

1. Norsk Tidend, July 11, 1942. The reviewer was John Sannes.
2. Ibid., July 15, 1942
3. Ibid., July 22, 1942. The adviser is Arne Ording.

This broadside from Norwegian circles in London, was occasioned by certain currents of agitation in Sweden. That country was valiantly trying to keep alive the old traditions of Northern neutrality, and hoping for a better day, when it could serve as the mediator between Finland in the east, and Norway and Denmark in the west. These endeavors naturally stimulated much thought about post-war collaboration among the Scandinavian peoples. Many Swedes were thinking, with varying degrees of vagueness or clarity, of their country as the nucleus around which the others might some day rally to form a Northern unity, prepared to defend its interests with more strength and cohesion than it could summon in 1940.

How these hopes and aspirations were later to be implemented had begun to concern a number of Swedes. Some, taking for granted the restored independence of the several Northern states, conceived of an alliance, perhaps between all the Northern states, perhaps between Norway and Sweden alone. Others, and they may not have been too numerous, though they were represented in high places, were thinking increasingly in terms of a true federation of Northern peoples. The latter current was made strikingly articulate in a booklet published early in the

summer of 1942 under the title Nordens Forente Stater ("United States of the North"). It was the work of three collaborators -- an army officer, a school principal, and a former cooperatives specialist(now the head of the Swedish postal system).[1]

Some of the proposals made in the booklet were, as seen from London, very audacious. They called not only for a common trade and foreign policy and for a common defense, but also for agencies to implement these in a close federative scheme -- a parliament of two houses, a supreme court, a single executive and a new Scandinavian capital (for which Drottningholm in Sweden was suggested). They contemplated nothing short of an eventual merging of the five Northern nationalities in a single new polity based on a Scandinavian nationality.

Though many Swedes were thinking of Northern collaboration in some form, the number who conceived of it in such advanced concrete terms was probably not large. What the people in Denmark and Norway thought of these ideas there was no way of knowing directly. The only authority free to speak, was the Norwegian government-in-exile in London.

---

1. The three men were Karl Petander, Willy Kleen, and Anders Örne.

The Norwegian response as delivered in the broadside from London in July had a comprehensive objective, though it was directed in the first instance at the federation scheme. It attacked this idea on economic, strategic, and ideological grounds.

It called the plan impractical because the economic interests of the Northern states were in many things not complementary to one another. They were therefore not able to form a closed economic unit, strong enough to carry the burden of defense against one or more hostile Great Powers. In the field of strategy, the problem was two fold; it sprang from the great extent of Scandinavia and the intervening water areas, and from the exposed frontiers beyond Denmark to the south and Finland to the east. Any circles in Sweden that might be thinking of a combination to face Russia, were reminded that "it was not in Norway's interest" to have a federation that might eventually be used in a Finnish war of revenge against Russia.

On ideological grounds the argument of the Swedish pamphlet seemed open to very serious objections in London. It sought a federation of Northern states, in order to pursue the traditional policy of neutrality.

But Norway had found that policy wanting. One of the premises (erroneous, it found) was the assumption that in war, both sets of belligerents must be treated alike. This, however, was an illusion. There were differences between the Great Powers, just as there were differences between individuals, e.g., "between Hitler and Roosevelt." It was impolitic not to recognize such differences, as Norway had discovered. Having joined in the battle for freedom against Nazism, "we have said farewell to the policy of neutrality." "Beyond a defense of national scope, we seek security in regional agreements with those powers which are our Allies today."

III. THE SWEDISH REACTION

That these London pronouncements had their intended effect in Sweden was soon clear enough.[1] The liberal Dagens Nyheter called the opinions a "cold shower" and the pro-labor Aftontidningen spoke of their "shock effect." Most Swedes had come to feel, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, that there was a "Northern" way to peace which the war had rudely disturbed. For the time being the custodian of that way was Sweden. Now the London statements seemed completely to invalidate these premises; the Norwegians were apparently turning their backs on the ideals of Northern collaboration and Northern unity.

The Swedish press made the best defense it could. Dagens Nyheter was not so sure the aspirations of the home population in Norway had been correctly expressed in London. Sweden did have a tradition of neutrality to guard, and it could not afford to line up with one set of belligerents against the other. Aftontidningen put in a reminder that when the war was over, international cooperation would have to begin again between peoples that were closely related in culture and

---

1. Cf. "Svenske kommentarer til Vår kamp og Nordens fremtid," Norsk Tidend, July 22, 1942, p. 3.

traditions. The pro-German Aftonbladet thought Norwegian circles in London were unduly eager to accept postwar collaboration with the Soviets. There was uneasiness in many circles over Russia, particularly since Sir Stafford Cripps had seemingly left Russia with an open field in the Baltic. Some wondered too whether the Norwegian government-in-exile had made any commitments to Britain which might make it an Anglo-Saxon dependency, after the war. This would be fatal to the North; it would help to balkanize Scandinavia, by lining up these several peoples with opposing Great Powers.

Some Swedes thought they saw in the technique of the Norwegian pronouncements evidence of a certain immaturity in the Norwegian tradition of conducting foreign affairs. There was a valid historical basis for such a view. In 1907 the Norwegian Foreign Office -- it had been organized only two years earlier -- took a dubious step in negotiating an Integrity Treaty with the Great Powers. This left Norway with a shadow hovering over its newly-won sovereignty (the shadow was not finally dissipated until 1924), and some Swedish circles enjoyed the mild discomfiture which the Norwegian Foreign Office consequently experienced for a time. In

Swedish eyes, the procedures of July 1942, might suggest a similar lack of maturity.

Swedish sensibilities were ruffled by the bumptious tone of certain passages in the London pronouncements. The very title of the Norsk Tidend editorial, "Our Battle and the Future of the North," was a challenge. In the delicate international situation in which they found themsleves, the Swedes hardly welcomed a reminder that "among the Northern countries, it is Norway which today suffers and battles for the Northern tradition of freedom and justice, and hence for the freedom of the entire North." Those who were well informed took note of the fact that the editor of Norsk Tidend is J. Schanche Jonasen who in pre-Nazi days was foreign affairs editor of Tidens Tegn, an Oslo daily. In the twenties and thirties it championed a somewhat erratic liberalism; in foreign affairs, the line of policy it advocated was often chauvinistic.

There was a certain tartness also in some of the London references to the old union of Sweden and Norway. One must know the Norwegian people poorly, said the Norsk Tidend editorial, if one believed that with the resumption of peace, the Norwegians would relinquish

the freedom and independence for which they had fought prior to 1905. Throughout the entire union period (1814 - 1905) the Norwegian people struggled to become masters of their own foreign policy; any fresh attempt to create joint constitutional organs "would only poison relations among the Northern peoples," and lead to new internal strife."[1]

---

1. Norsk Tidend, July 11, 1942.

IV. THE CENTRAL PURPOSE OF THE JULY STATEMENTS

Swedish circles were ready -- too ready it would seem[1] -- to assume that the chief purpose of the Norwegian pronouncements was to invalidate the ideals of Northern collaboration and comity. "The Norwegian people," it had flatly been said, "had no desire to be merged in any higher unity after this war." It wanted to live its role as an Atlantic people.[2]

But the Norwegian pronouncements had been first concerned, not with Scandinavian collaboration, but with the traditional policy of neutrality. Security in the postwar world, Norwegian circles insisted, was not to be found in Scandinavian collaboration. The old neutrality policy, still very much alive in Sweden, would mean isolation, and in isolation there was no security. Any Scandinavian federation would be too small to assume the burden of a successful defense. Postwar security, as Norwegians in London saw it, must be sought in alliance with the aggregation of Atlantic-Soviet powers now fighting the Axis.

Norwegians did not mean, however, to rule

---

1. The Swedish interest, as such, in Northern collaboration, is, of course, not the concern of this memorandum.
2. Norsk Tidend, July 15, 1942.

out Scandinavian collaboration as such; in fact they hoped to continue that collaboration. "With Sweden as our nearest neighbor," said the Norsk Tidend editorial, "we wish to base this collaboration on concrete and definite agreements between the governments of the two countries." But it was important that any postwar Northern collaboration be fitted into the framework of the regional alliance formed by the United Nations. Norwegian circles entertained "the sincere wish" that Sweden be brought into this wider collaboration. "We hope that Sweden also will see the importance of joining these regional agreements. We find it difficult to see how remaining outside could be in the interests of Sweden."[1]

---

1. Norsk Tidend, July 22, 1942.

V. THE NEW YEAR'S CLARIFICATION

The Norwegian pronouncements of the midsummer were clarified by several official statements made at the turn of the New Year. Martin Tranmael, the ranking Norwegian labor editor, formerly of Arbeiderbladet, and now a refugee in Sweden, wrote at the end of the year[1] that he favored postwar collaboration, even a federation of Northern states, adding: "We would thereby gain the fundamentals of freedom and security."[2] From London, Prime Minister Nygaardsvold, on invitation, sent a New Year greeting to the provincial paper, Östgöten, at Linköping (Sweden), expressing the hope that when the war was over and distressing memories were overcome, "all countries in the North might again meet as free and independent nations in a firm and fruitful, but free Northern collaboration."[3] In a radio speech at New Year's, Foreign Minister Lie in London, denied that Norway had turned her back on Northern collaboration. He believed there would be a renewal of Scandinavian collaboration after the war. "We are opposed to Northern

---

1. In Kjölen, a new medium devoted to Swedish-Norwegian collaboration.
2. Radiogram från Sverige, January 4, 1943.
3. Ibid.

isolation in the future," he affirmed, "but we believe in Northern collaboration."[1]

These New Year opinions, especially Minister Lie's reasoned statement, contained much that was comforting to Swedish ears. They were greeted quite differently than were the pronouncements in July. They were welcomed as an endeavor to level down the unfavorable reactions of the midsummer. Lie pointed out that Norwegians rejoiced over the good will and support shown to the Norwegian cause in Sweden. They followed with interest and sympathy the Danish effort to restrict the German tyranny. They looked forward to friendly relations with a free and democratic Finland after the war. This sentiment struck a very responsive chord. "It would be gratifying," wrote Östergötlands Folkblad, "if an equally clear statement with regard to Norway were forthcoming from official Finland."[2]

The Swedes were depressed in July because they thought the Norwegians were turning away from Scandinavia, in favor of an Atlantic orientation. They were encouraged in January 1943, because the new statements seemed to mark

---

1. News of Norway, January 8, 1943.
2. Radiogram från Sverige, January 4, 1943.

a return to Northern collaboration. Actually in July, the Norwegians in London did not desert the ideals of Northern collaboration as completely as many Swedes assumed, and in January 1943, they did not return to them wholeheartedly. The freedom of the Northern countries, Lie observed in his message, is dependent on the victory of the United Nations. The Northern countries will not be able to maintain themselves in the future as independent nations unless they enter into a firmly organized cooperation with other free peoples and accept the obligations involved. "Experience has shown that we cannot base ourselves on the old neutrality policy."[1]

---

1. News of Norway, January 8, 1943.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the last half year, the Norwegian government has been serving notice that it considers the old policy of neutrality defunct. It is particularly anxious to make this clear to those Swedish circles which hope to rejuvenate the old neutrality policy through a renewal of Scandinavian collaboration, perhaps in some form of federation. The Norwegian government is not condemning Scandinavian collaboration as such. It is in fact ready to accept such collaboration as desirable and even necessary. However, it holds that this collaboration must be pursued, not in isolation, but within the framework of an alliance of free peoples, determined to keep future aggressors in check. Such an alliance may eventually broaden into a universal organization, capable of dealing with aggressors before they can precipitate world wars. In any such universal organization, collaboration among the Scandinavian peoples will take its natural place.